RICHMOND, VA - Congressman Bobby Scott (VA-03) and Congressman Eric Cantor (VA-07) sent a joint letter today to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in support of the Federal Railroad Administration's inclusion of the Southeast Rail Corridor in the Department of Transportation's recent announcement of a High-Speed Rail Strategic Plan.   Both Members of Congress agree that a high-speed rail line between Richmond and Washington, D.C. will provide a sensible and viable solution to the Richmond region's transportation challenges while creating jobs and billions of dollars in economic development. (Read Full Letter Attached & Below   )

 MEDIA ADVISORY

Congressmen Scott and Cantor will be joined by Mayor Dwight C. Jones and representatives from Virginians for High Speed Rail and the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce tomorrow, Friday, April 24, 2009, at 10:30 AM at the Main Street Station in Richmond, Virginia, to both thank the administration for the inclusion of Southeast Rail Corridor in its strategic plan, and also to call upon Virginia to submit requests and plans through competitive grants to ensure the implementation of this important project.

 WHO:

 CONGRESSMAN ERIC CANTOR (VA-07)
 CONGRESSMAN BOBBY SCOTT (VA-03)
 MAYOR DWIGHT C. JONES

 DANIEL PLAUGHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VIRGINIANS FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL
 KIM SCHEELER, PRESIDENT, GREATER RICHMOND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

    WHAT: PRESS CONFERENCE ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL
    WHEN:

 TOMORROW, FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2009

10:30 A.M.

   WHERE: MAIN STREET STATION

1500 EAST MAIN STREET

RICHMOND, VA 23219

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Letter to Secretary LaHood:

April 23, 2009

Ray LaHood, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary LaHood:

We write to you today to support the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) inclusion of the Southeast Rail Corridor in the Department of Transportation's (DOT) recent announcement of a High-Speed Rail Strategic Plan. As you may know, the existing rail between Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia is of great economic importance throughout our region and we commend DOT's prompt attention towards establishing final guidance for competitive grants to improve this corridor.

The Richmond area is a major economic hub in the Commonwealth of Virginia - home to seven Fortune 500 companies, over 20,000 small businesses, and rated 7th on the Forbes list of top 200 "Best Places for Business and Careers." There is no doubt that proximity to our nation's capital plays a major role in the success of our region. Each year, over 5.7 million people visit the Richmond area, generating $1.8 billion for our local economy. However, the transportation corridor between Washington, D.C. and Richmond is widely known as one of the most congested transportation corridors in the country.

High-speed rail provides a sensible and viable solution to our region's transportation challenges. It is estimated that creating a high-speed railway through Virginia will generate as many as 185,500 jobs, as much as $21.2 billion in economic development, and pull nearly 6.5 million cars off the road annually. Providing a high-speed rail service from Washington, D.C. to Richmond will drive economic development throughout our region for many years to come.

Private industry has demonstrated an overwhelming interest to partake in high-speed rail, best gauged by a request for proposals, required by the Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-432), which required DOT to seek projects for the financing, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of a high-speed intercity passenger rail system operating within Federally designated high-speed rail corridors. We applaud FRA's efforts to build on this recent undertaking.

As you continue to establish final guidance for a competitive bidding process for high-speed rail projects, we wish to call your attention to the importance of a Washington, D.C. to Richmond line. We believe it is truly an investment in our economic future.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bobby Scott   Rep. Eric Cantor
Member of Congress   Member of Congress